

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-15 TRSE-00 /069 W  
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R 231527Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 543  
INFO EC COLLECTIVE  
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS  
USNMR SHAPE  
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS THE HAGUE 2672

USNMR HAPE FOR POLAD

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: PINT NL  
SUBJECT: DUTCH ELECTIONS--A CLOSE RACE EXPECTED

1. HOLLAND GOES TO THE POLLS MAY 25 TO ELECT A NEW SECOND CHAMBER OF THE STATES GENERAL. ALTHOUGH SOME 25 PARTIES ARE COMPETING FOR THE 150 SEATS IN THE LOWER HOUSE OF THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT NO MORE THAN THE 14 REPRESENTED IN THE LAST ASSEMBLY AND PERHAPS A FEW LESS CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO DRAW THE TWO-THIRDS OF A PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE TO WIN A SEAT. IF ATTENTION SHOWN BY THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION POLLS IS ANY GUIDE, THE ELECTION, RATHER THAN DEMONSTRATING ANY PRONOUNCED SWING TO EITHER POLE WILL RESULT IN A GROWTH OF THE THREE DOMINANT PARTIES IN DUTCH POLITICS AT THE EXPENSE OF SOME MINOR PARTIES.

2. DESPITE THE PROLIFERATION OF PARTIES (EVERYTHING  
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FROM MAOISTS TO NEO-FASCISTS, FUNDAMENTALIST PROTESTANTS AND TRADITIONALIST CATHOLICS, OLD AGE PENSIONERS AND A MOVEMENT AGAINST CIVIL SERVANT ARBITRARINESS), THE DUTCH ELECTION HAS COME DOWN TO A THREE HORSE RACE BETWEEN LABOR (PVDA), CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (CDA) AND LIBERALS (VVD). ATTENTION IS INCREASINGLY FOCUSED ON THEIR THREE LIST LEADERS, PRIME MINISTER JOOP DEN UYL

(PVDA) DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DRIES VAN AGT (CDA) AND  
OPPOSITION LEADER HANS WIEGEL ;VDL. "VICTORY" IN  
THE ELECTION WILL BE DETERMINED BY HOW WELL THOSE THREE  
DO IN PULLING VOTES FOR THEIR PARTIES. IF ALL PICK UP  
A FEW SEATS THEY COULD ALL CLAIM TO HAVE "WON."

3. A CLOSE RACE IS FORECAST BETWEEN THE LARGEST OF  
THE TWO PARTIES, LABOR AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, WITH  
THE LIBERALS CONTINUING IN THIRD PLACE. AT THE LAST  
ELECTION IN 1972 THE THREE SEPARATE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC  
PARTIES, CATHOLIC, ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY AND CHRISTIAN  
HISTORICAL, WON 48 SEATS, LABOR TOOK 43 AND THE  
LIBERALS 22. SEVERAL RECENT OPINION POLLS INDICATE THAT  
THE PVDA AND CDA ARE IN A NECK AND NECK RACE. WITH  
SOME 16 PERCENT OF THE VOTERS STILL UNDECIDED FORE-  
CASTERS SEE THE TWO PARTIES WINNING BETWEEN 43 AND 52  
SEATS. DEN UYL'S LABOR PARTY SEEMS TO HAVE OVERCOME  
AN EARLY LEAD BY VAN AGT'S CDA AND COULD JUST NOSE IT  
OUT TO EMERGE AS THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST PARTY. WIEGEL'S  
VVD SEEMS SET TO REGISTER A GAIN OVER 1972, BUT ALSO  
HAS SLIPPED IN VOTER POPULARITY FROM ITS POSITION EARLY  
IN THE CAMPAIGN. THE VVD IS NOW IN THE 25-31 SEAT RANGE.  
THE ONLY OTHER PARTY WHICH POLLSTERS PICK TO POSSIBLY  
REGISTER A NOTEWORTHY GAIN IS D'66, A LEFT CENTER  
MEMBER OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT WHICH NOW HOLDS  
SIX SEATS.

4. THE LARGE BLOCK OF UNDECIDED VOTERS MAY MASK SOME  
HIDDEN STRENGTH FOR SMALL PARTIES. IT IS NOT CLEAR  
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HOW MANY SUPPORTERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (CPN) AND  
FRINGE PARTIES AT BOTH ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM ARE WILLING  
TO EXPRESS THEIR TRUE OPINIONS TO POLLSTERS. ALTHOUGH  
THE POLLS INDICATE SOME STRENGTH FOR SMALL PARTIES, IT IS  
THOUGHT THAT SEVERAL GROUPS WHICH GET NO SUPPORT IN OPINION  
POLLS AT ALL MAY IN FACT WIN A SEAT OR TWO. EVEN SO, ON CURRENT  
EVIDENCE, 1977 SEEMS TO BE THE YEAR FOR DUTCH VOTERS TO  
CHOOSE, MORE THAN THEY HAVE IN THE PAST BETWEEN THREE  
MAIN LINES, THE SOCIALISTS ON THE LEFT, CHRISTIAN  
DEMOCRATS IN THE CENTER AND LIBERALS ON THE RIGHT.

5. SHOULD CURRENT TRENDS HOLD THROUGH THE MAY 25  
ELECTION NONE OF THE LARGE PARTIES WILL BE ABLE TO  
DEMONSTRATE A CLEAR VOTER PREFERENCE FOR THEIR PRO-  
GRAM. ALL COULD DO WELL, BUT PERHAPS NOT WELL ENOUGH  
TO CLAIM A MANDATE FROM THE VOTERS. REGARDLESS OF THE  
OUTCOME, ALL OBSERVERS HERE LOOK FOR A DIFFICULT, AND  
PERHAPS LONG DRAWN OUT CABINET FORMATION.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
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